Macauliffe
Memorial
Lecture

Soldierly Traditions of the Sikhs

By
Dr. Hari Ram Gupta

SOLDIERLY TRADITIONS OF THE SIKHS UPTO 1849

© Hari Ram Gupta

Publishers : Sirjana Press, 45, Chand Nagar, New Delhi-110 018
Phototype Setters : Pullshoppe, 236, Kamla Nagar, New Delhi-2.
Printers : Mini Printers, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi.
Rs. 10/-

SOLDIERLY TRADITIONS OF THE SIKHS UPTO 1849

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I must express my feelings of deep gratitude to the Indian Council for Sikh Affairs for inviting me to deliver the second Macauliffe Memorial Lecture. The famous writer Dr. Johnson has said: "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors." Hence the Council has done well in instituting these lectures in honour of the eminent author of Sikh Religion. I join you all in offering my humble tribute to the great scholar in all reverence and humility.

Sardar Baldev Singh Bal, General Secretary of the Indian Council for Sikh Affairs, has particularly asked me to speak on the 'Soldierly traditions of the Sikhs.

General qualifications of a soldier

A soldier anywhere in the world is expected to possess the following three qualifications of body, mind and soul.

1 A military appearance and bearing, implying that he must be neat, smart and impressive.

2. Certain qualities of mind such as coolness, courage, determination, endurance, discipline, and aversion to desertion under heavy onslaughts of the enemy.

3. Some traits of character like loyalty, restraint over temptation to plunder, sexual indulgence, and tendency to commit unnecessary slaughter of men and destruction of property.

The following pages will reveal special traits of the character of Sikh soldiery and the soldierly traditions established by them in course of time.

The first Sikh soldier

Guru Hargobind succeeded to Guru gaddi at the age of 11. When 14 years old, he was summoned to Delhi by Emperor Jahangir. At Delhi the Guru put up at Majnun ka Tila on the banks of the Yamuna, where Guru Nanak had lived with the Muslim saint Majnun in the time of Sikandar Lodi.

Jahangir found Hargobind a handsome and plucky youth and received him courteously. He asked him several questions. Jahangir wrote in his diary:

> "I ordered that he should be produced in my court. He obeyed orders. He could not give proper replies to my questions. I found him without wisdom and sagacity, and extremely arrogant (*bighayat maghrur wa khudpasand*). I thought it was necessary to confine him for a few days in a disciplinary jail. *(zindan-e- adal)* so that his brain and temper may be somewhat rectified and the peoples' commotion may subside. I therefore entrusted him to the stone-hearted (*sangdil*) Bani Rae to keep him a prisoner in the fort of Gwalior[1] "

Some Sikh historians believing in Jahangir's words declare that the Guru lived in Gwalior jail for a short period. Mohsin Fani says that Guru Hargobind remained in Gwalior fort for 12 years.

Mohsin Fani, the author of the *Dabistan*, was 20 years younger than the Guru. He frequently met him and his Sikhs. With one Sikh named Sadh he travelled from Kabul to Lahore, a distance of about 800 kilometres. He was in

correspondence with the Guru who signed his name Nanak. He stayed at Kiratpur for a long time, was present at the time of his death and attended the Guru's funeral. He wrote the account of the Sikhs at the age of 30, when all his mental faculties were at their zenith. He writes :

> "Hargobind was sent to Gwalior. He lived there for 12 years. He was not allowed to have even saltish food. During that period Masands and Sikhs used to go there to pay him homage below the fort wall. At last Hazrat Jannat Makani was kind enough to set him free[2]."

Jahangir, while returning from Kashmir, died at Rajauri on 7 November, 1627. Shah Jahan succeeded him.

Emperor Shah Jahan in 1632 came to know that some Hindus of Rajauri, Bhimbar and Gujrat in the Panjab took Muslim girls as wives and converted them to Hinduism. The Emperor stopped such marriages and Muslim women already married numbering about 4,500 were seized from their husbands. Some of the men were fined and others who delayed compliance or protested were executed.

In 1635 it was reported to the Emperor that many years ago a Muslim girl named Zainib had been converted, given the name of Ganga, and was married by Dalpat, a Hindu of Sirhind. The woman, with her seven children, one son and six daughters, was taken away and the man was executed.

Another Muslim girl, Kaulan, a daughter of Rustam Khan, the Qazi of Lahore, was a disciple of the celebrated saint, Mian Mir. She used to come from home to serve the saint daily. When she was 17 years old, her father did not allow her to go. She sought shelter with Mian Mir who conveyed her to Amritsar for protection under Guru Hargobind. The Guru immortalised her by constructing a

new tank at Amritsar, named after her Kaulsar.

Under Emperor's orders three temples were demolished in Panjab and mosques were built in their places. The baoli of Guru Arjan at Lahore, built in memory of his father, was filled up with rubbish, and the *langar* building attached to it was converted into a mosque.

The Hindus of the Panjab looked upon the Gurus as their leaders. They sought Guru Hargobind's guidance against these atrocities by the government. In consequence the Guru was involved in a number of battles with the imperial troops. He had to change his headquarters five times, from Amritsar to Chubhal, then to Sri Hargobindpur, later to Kartarpur in Jalandhar district, from there to Phagwara and finally to Kiratpur. Bhai Gurdas says :

Natha phire na dare draya

The first tradition

The Guru's soldiers thus established the first tradition to defend the innocent people against government oppression.

Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh created a number of traditions for the Sikh soldiers.

While at Paonta from 1685 to 1688, Guru Gobind Singh expected an attack on him by the hill rajas. He recruited 500 Pathans in the army. A little before the battle of Bhangani in 1688, the Pathans deserted him and went over to the enemy on the temptation of higher pay. The Guru managed to gain victory with the help of Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura, but he made up his mind never to enlist mercenaries again.

The second tradition—National force

The Guru therefore established the second traditon of having a national force alone. For this purpose he laid the foundation of the Khalsa in March, 1699. This national force was dedicated to defend religion against Aurangzeb's fanaticism.

Heroism

Guru Gobind Singh laid great stress on skill and dash. The Muslims called Hindus sparrows and themselves hawks. As a hawk cuts a sparrow to pieces, the Muslims cut Hindus to pieces. The Guru gave a reply to their claim in the following couplet:

Chiryan kolon baz marawan,
Tan main gobind nam rakhawan.

The third traditon

Guru Gobind Singh filled in his Khalsa the spirit of heroism to wage a war of liberation (*dharam yudh*) against foreign rule. It was their third tradtion.

The fourtn tradition—Sublimation of sex instinct

Another special feature insisted upon by the Guru for his Sikh soldiers was to sublimate their sex instinct.

Par nari ki sej
Bhul supne hun na jaiyo.
(Go not ye, even in dream, to the bed of a woman other than your own wife.)

The Guru wrote his works in poetry. The total number of verses in all the works of Guru Gobind Singh is 17,293. Of these 7,569 verses or about 44 per cent of his total compositions are devoted to the control of sex. The Guru

knew that a man's weakness in general arose from three sources: *Zan, Zar, Zamin* (Women, money and land). Of these the greatest weakness of man was for the sex. The Guru wished to divert their sex impulse into a higher and nobler channel for *Dharam Yudh*. This was their fourth tradition.

The fifth tradition—The holy warriors or saint soldiers

In fact Guru Gobind Singh wanted to create a class of holy warriors or saint soldiers. A true soldier is a saintly person, and a true saint is a mighty warrior, a powerful hero. The hero is a person who can restrain the natural outgoing tendency of the mind and the senses. He is a seeker after truth. Through *Sadhana* or spiritual discipline he enjoys eternal bliss and is ever immersed in perennial peace. He wages a war in order that the good and innocent people of the world might live in peace, and enjoy reasonable happiness. The self is the fountain-source of immortality, eternal bliss and enduring tranquility. Back to the self, is the motto of the saint. This calls for greater heroism than is needed even on the battlefield. The internal war is more deadly than the external war. The inner enemy is more dreadful than the external enemy.

A saint soldier surrenders his infinite nature to the Lotus-Feet of the Lord. He cuts off the shackles that bind him to this earth. He detaches himself from earthly ties. For an instant it looks as if he has jumped into the ocean, but the hero does not hestitate. He takes the plunge. He discovers that he has jumped into the safest boat of God's Grace. He returns to the shore as a victor, monarch of all he surveys. He is the saviour, the greatest saint. He is the supreme benefactor of humanity.

The saint-soldier is the very embodiment of renunciation

and devotion to duty. He is ever ready to give up all what is dear to him, even his life to defend freedom of innocent people, freedom of the country and to protect Dharam. He is ready to undergo any amount of suffering and hardship to achieve this sublime ideal. His life is synonymous with discipline. Heroism is ingrained in his very nature.

Banda Bahadur—The sixth tradition

Banda, accompanied by five advisers and 25 Sikhs as his bodyguard supplied by Guru Gobind Singh reached near Hissar in October, 1709. In seven months he was joined by nearly 5,000 Sikhs from Malwa who had fought under Guru Gobind Singh. Their chief object was to punish Wazir Khan. The other group consisting of young Sikhs whose aim was to punish and plunder the Muslims numbered about 10,000. They were also from Malwa.

The third group of Hindu Jats, Gujars and Rajputs, also numbered about 10,000. They were mainly intent on plunder. Khafi Khan, a contemporary historian of Aurangzeb, estimated the total strength of Banda Bahadur from thirty to forty thousand.[3]

Banda's followers had matchlocks, swords, spears, bows and arrows. They had no elephants, no good horses, and no guns. In spite of this Banda won the battle of Sirhind on 12, May, 1710 and killed Wazir Khan. The town was thoroughly sacked. The province of Sirhind lying between rivers Satluj and Yamuna and consisting of 28 parganahs, yielding 52 lakhas of rupees annually, was occupied, and Sikh officers were appointed everywhere in the administration. In June, 1710, Banda seized the territory of Jalandhar Doab and Majha upto the borders of Lahore city. In July, 1710 he captured the upper Ganga Doab. Banda had taken one year in reaching the Panjab

from Nander, seven months in raising an army and three months in establishing the first Sikh state from Ravi to Ganga.

Banda Bahadur showed the Sikh soldiery the advantages of a national state. Their love of freedom became their sixth tradition.

Emperor Bahadur Shah's campaign against Banda Bahadur, September-December, 1710

Banda had been in power for a few months only, when Bahadur Shah, having killed his brother Kam Bakhsh at Hyderabad (Deccan), hurried to the north to suppress the Sikh revolt. The royal army was joined by the governors of Allahabad, Lucknow, Moradabad and Delhi. The Sayyids of Barah Sadat, Mewatis, Bundela Rajputs of Bundelkhand, Churaman Jat of Bharatpur and all the Muslim chiefs and jagirdars and Ranghars living on both sides of the Yamuna north of Delhi accompanied the Emperor. The Emperor was so much in a hurry that he did not enter Delhi and marched straight to Sadhaura, situated near Banda's headquarters at Mukhlispur renamed by him Lohgarh, lying in the jungles of lower Shivalik hills. Small parties of Sikhs sent by Banda for scouting were all destroyed. Hundreds of Sikh heads with their long flowing beards and hair were hung up on trees all along the road from Karnal to Sadhaura. The Emperor established his base camp for operations at Sadhaura, where he received 300 Sikh heads sent by Shams Khan from Sirhind.

A strong Mughal force advanced from Sadhaura towards Lohgarh. At a distance of 5 kms they were attacked by Banda. Khafi Khan writes: "It is impossible for me to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their faqir dress (kachha, kurta, cotton-padded waistcoat,

pagri and *desi juti* without socks) struck terror into imperial troops. The number of the dead and dying of the Imperialists was so large that for a time it seemed as if they were losing ground[4]." In this battle Banda lost 1,500 Sikhs and two sardars[5].

The siege of Lohgarh

After a number of skirmishes and battles, the imperial army, 60,000 strong, marched to besiege Lohgarh. Prime Minister Munim Khan, his son Mahabat Khan, and Chatarsal Bundela were in charge of the right wing. Udet Singh Bundela and Churaman Jat commanded the left wing. Rustamdil Khan was in the centre. Under heavy shelling by the Sikhs, the Mughal army besieged the fort on all sides. The Sikhs fought a hard battle at the foot of the hill. Large numbers were killed on both sides. The surviving Sikhs went up the hill.

The fort of Lohgarh was small. There was no space for storing large quantities of grain and grass. Their supplies of foodstuff and fodder ran short. Khafi Khan says: "The infidels bought what they could from the grain dealers with the royal army and pulled it up with ropes[6]."

In this exigency Banda decided to escape. A Sikh Gulab Singh Khatri, great grandson of Guru Hargobind, had a great resemblance with Banda. He put on Banda's clothes and sat in his place. At 3 O' clock in the morning on 11 December, 1710, a hollow trunk of a big tamarind tree lying in the lower parts of the hill was filled with gunpowder. The guns in the fort were also kept ready for firing simultaneously. Just when the gunpower in the tree was blown off and the guns in the fort fired, Banda and his men in the dresses of Mughal soldiers taken off from the dead, escaped in the smoke screen through one km long camp

of the Mughals into the hills of Sirmaur. From there Banda passed through Nalagarh, Bilaspur, Kutlehr, Jaswan, Siba and Nurpur and took shelter in Chamba hills.

With the sunrise on 11 December, 1710, the imperial army assaulted the fort. Gulab Singh and his companions kept on firing. Gulab Singh with thirty companions was captured. All others had either been killed or fled away. The booty comprised many horses and camels, five elephants, three big guns, 17 light guns, a few muskets, and swords, a canopy with silver poles, gold and silver coins worth 8 lakhs of rupees and buried gold coins worth 20 lakhs of rupees.

Farrukh Siyar's diplomacy

Bahadur Shah died in February, 1712, and immediately after his death, Banda recovered Sirhind and Lohgarh. Jahandar Shah was the next king. He ordered Muhammad Amin Khan, governor of Moradabad, to seize Banda. He besieged Lohgarh, but was repulsed. In 1713 Farrukh Siyar became king. The new emperor adopted stringent measures against Banda. He intensified the compaign at Lohgarh. A number of ladders with seven hundred wooden steps were prepared to reach the fort on top of the hill. At the same time he resorted to diplomacy. Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi were living in Delhi. The Emperor exerted pressure on Mata Sundari, then acting as head of the Khalsa, to write to Banda to accept a jagir for himself and his generals and to enlist the Sikhs in the Mughal army. Banda refused to submit. Thereupon Mata Sundari was forced to write to the Sikh leaders to desert Banda. About 15,000 Sikhs decided to join the Mughals. Banda placed the choice before them either to accept the Sikh state or jagirs and service under the Mughals. They decided to obey Mata Sundari and take up service under

the Emperor. Banda felt deeply disappointed. He told them that the deserters would have to re-unite with him and the Sikh state would endure. The following couplet was composed by him:

Raj karega Khalsa,
Aqi rahe na koe;
Khwar hoe sab mange;
Bache saran jo hoe.

In Persian aqi means disobedient or rebellious and Khwar means deserted.

The couplet means : The Khalsa shall rule, no rebels shall exist; all the deserters shall perisk , all those seeking shelter will be saved.

Banda committed the greatest blunder in taking up his last position in the Majha. The Majha people gave him no support whatsoever. Most of his Malwa troops were cut to pieces. Some must have deserted. After a desperate siege lasting for nearly 9 months, Banda was captured along with his 740 followers. The 15,000 Sikhs in Mughal service were employed in fighting against Banda. They were all destroyed.

Even Mata Sundari did not escape the violence of the government. Her adopted son was tied to the tail of an elephant, and while being dragged through the streets of Delhi perished. Her house was plundered and set on fire. She managed to escape to Mathura along with Mata Sahib Devi. They were offered protection and a house there by the Raja of Jaipur.

The seventh tradition—Blind belief in religious head

The Sikhs established the seventh tradition of blind obedience to the religious head whether competent or

incompetent in matters of political nature.

(The same thing was repeated in 1844, five years after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Bhai Bir Singh was a Sikh saint. He was living at Sirhali on the right bank of the Satluj, a little below Harike, about 35 kms from Firozpur. Raja Hira Singh was the prime minister of the Sikh kingdom. The Bhai declared that the prime minister of the Sikh state must be a Sikh, and he proposed Atar Singh Sandhanwalia for this office. The Sandhanwalias had killed Maharaja Sher Singh, his very able and promising son Prince Partap Singh and prime minister Raja Dhian Singh.

(The Sikh soldiers began to join Bhai Bir Singh. They were in favour of making Bhai Bir Singh Maharaja in place of Maharaja Dalip Singh with Atar Singh as his prime minister. On 31 December, 1843, the Bhai had about 5,000 soldiers with him. The number was steadily rising. General Sudh Singh and Diwan Baisakha Singh joined Bir Singh's camp in January, 1844. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's sons, Kanwars Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh joined him in April, 1844.

(Hira Singh tried to settle the matter with Bhai Bir Singh by negotiations. On 9 April, 1844, he sent Akali Jaimal Singh to the Bhai. The Bhai put forth certain demands. Hira Singh gave evasive replies. He gave Rs. 5,000 to the Bhai's agent and dismissed him. On 29 April, 1844, Hira Singh sent Sardul Singh to the Bhai who made only two reasonable demands.

(Just at this time Atar Singh Sandhanwalia who had fled to British territory joined Bhai Bir Singh's camp on 2 May, 1844. On this very day 400 Sikh soldiers deserted the army and joined Bir Singh. On 7 May, Hira Singh deputed Gulab

Singh Calcuttawala offering three proposals to Bir Singh: either to surrender Atar Singh or to drive him out of his camp or himself to retire from his camp. Bir Singh rejected all the terms. Atar Singh shot down Gulab Singh, the Lahore envoy. A Sikh force was sent from Lahore. Atar Singh Sandhanwalia, Bhai Bir Singh and Prince Kashmira Singh were all killed. Diwan Baisakha Singh was captured. About 600 men in Bhai's camp were killed and 200 were drowned in the Satluj.)

Persecution of the Sikhs

Farrukh Siyar issued a general edict which was applicable to all parts of the Mughal empire. According to it every Sikh wherever seen was to be immediately arrested. He was to be offered only one alternative, Islam or sword. A schedule of valuable rewards was proclaimed, Rs. 25 for a Sikh head and Rs.100 for a Sikh captive. Young and pretty Sikh women were made concubines, others became maid servants. The Sikh prisoners dug graves for Muslims and were employed in *begar*[7].

In those days there were separate wells of drinking water for Muslims and Hindus or Sikhs. In Sikh villages wells were polluted by dropping cow's entrails and bones. The Sikhs were in a critical condition. They had no leader to guide them.

George Forster who travelled in the Panjab 60 years later wrote :

"Such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such was the success of the exertions, that the name of Sicque no longer existed in the Mughal dominion. Those who still adhered to the tenets of Nanock, either fled into the mountains at the head of the

Panjab, or cut off their hair, and exteriorly renounced the profession of their religion[8]."

The faithful followers of the Gurus experienced the worst possible time in their history. Hunted like hare and pursued like wild beast they wandered from place to place seeking shelter to save themselves from the fury of the government, and from the revenge of hostile Muslim population. Only Shivalik hills of Kangra and Hoshiarpur, Malwa desert and Lakhi Jungle held out their arms open to receive them and offer them wild fruit, vegetables and flesh to eat and enjoy the beauty of Nature.

Misery, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, poverty, privation, distress and despair, were the battlefields which had their heroes, obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the renowned heroes. Misery became the mother. Distress was the nurse. Misfortune was a good breast for great souls. This gave birth to the power of the soul and mind. Nature offered her gifts to them lavishly. Their robust health, great strength, strong arms, stout legs, shining eyes, fresh cheeks, black locks, pure breath were the gifts of Nature.

The eighth tradition

Self-confidence and defiance of difficulties became their eighth tradition.

Two divisions of the Sikhs, 1734

In 1733 Zakariya Khan, the viceroy of the Panjab, won over the Sikhs by the conferment of the title of Nawab on Kapur Singh and the grant of a jagir to enable the Sikhs to live in peace at Amritsar. Soon afterwards a conflict arose between young men and the older Sikhs over the arrangements for the distribution of food and fodder for horses and milch cattle. Nawab Kapur Singh separated

them. All persons below 35 formed the Taruna Dal and others above 35 were called Budha Dal. This division has come down to our own times and is exactly 250 years old.

The ninth tradition

This division into two halves was their ninth tradition.

The Dal Khalsa, 1748

Five years later Nadir Shah invaded India in 1739. The Panjab fell into complete confusion and disorder. The Sikhs collected enormous riches, horses and buffaloes. The Sikh population was very small. Hindu young men joined the Sikh ranks in large numbers. Every young man of dash and daring built up his own *Jatha* or plundering band. Their number rose to about 65 *Jathas*. They all worked independently. Besides Ahmad Shah Durrani began a series of invasions every alternate year. Further, Muin-ul-Mulk, popularly called Mir Mannu, a very strict disciplinarian, was appointed viceroy of the Panjab. Nawab Kapur Singh was greatly alarmed. He saw sheer destruction for individual groups working independently. He found their safety in unity. Hence in 1748 he organised all the 65 groups into 11 units called misls and united them into a single body called the Dal Khalsa under the chief leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Though all the fighting bodies of the Sikhs had been united into the Dal Khalsa, their two divisions of Budha Dal and Taruna Dal endured. The Budha Dal consisted of six misls— Alhuwalia , Dallewalia, Faizullahpuria or Singhpuria, Karorasinghia, Nishanwala and Shahid. The misls of the Taruna Dal were—Bhangi, Kanahya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia. The Phulkian chiefs did not join either group due to different policy. Both the Dals were opposed to the Mughals of Delhi and Afghans of Kandhar and Kabul. The Phulkian chiefs professed loyalty to Delhi,

Kandhar and Kabul: The leadership of the Dal Khalsa as well as of the Budha Dal was with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Hari Singh Bhangi was the leader of Taruna Dal.

The tenth tradition

The unity in division was their tenth tradition.

Three Sikhs drove away a Mughal regiment, March, 1754

During the conflict with the Mughal governors of the Panjab, the Sikhs displayed unprecedented valour and bravery, and showed theirskill in facing any danger as will be clear from the following incident.

Mir Mannu died in November, 1753. His wife known as Mughlani Begam began to rule. The Delhi Government did not take much interest in the Panjab affairs. There were many revolts against the government of a woman. The Sikhs created disturbances everywhere. One of their strongholds was Patti. The Begam appointed a Turki Jamadar, Qasim Khan, Darogha of Patti. He was provided with a few cannon, 300 jizairchis from Badakhshan, 100 Turki cavalry, a few thousand Mughal horse and foot and a large amount of cash Tahmas Khan Miskin who was serving under Qasim Khan as a captain writes :

"Qasim Khan left Lahore and encamped at the garden of Lakhpat Rae, at a distance of 6 kms. The following day we also joined him at the garden. He gave us a warm reception and presented to each of us as a mark of hospitality two gold coins to be spent at a dance in the night. By chance the same day an encounter with the Sikhs took place. The people insisted very much on his taking the initiative in attacking the wretches and putting them to the sword so that they might be extirpated, but Qasim Khan did not agree. In the evening we came back and entered our camps. Just then the Sikhs came fighting

from behind and reached near our camps. Then they returned and we passed the night (in suspense). On the following day we marched towards Patti and encamped at a Mughal village named Damomodaran at a distance of 36 kms. The headmen and the people of the place came to pay their respects. All were captured and put under arrest, while the fort and the village were plundered. The village was besieged on the plea that they were in league with the Sikhs. We lay encamped there for a month and none of their women and children who had been imprisoned were set at liberty. The Sikhs attacked us daily both times (morning and evening), fought and retired.

"After a few days Qasim Khan appointed one of his brothers named Alim Beg Khan, at the head of 1,000 horse and foot to lead an attack by way of *chapawal* on a Sikh village where they had assembled. The Sikhs got ready, and the fight began. The perseverance of Alim Beg Khan gave way. Finding himself unequal to the task he returned, giving up all his 300 Badakhshani foot soldiers to slaughter. On learning this news Qasim Khan mounted and started for the place. I also, accompanied by two horsemen, followed and joined him at a distance of 6 kms. I saw that the men were coming back running and I found my fellow tribesmen, Muhammad Aqil, etc. who had gone with the *chapawal* safe and sound. We proceeded farther. I was astonished to see that only three Sikh soldiers were driving away the troops. I galloped after them 4 or 5 kms. I came across a large number of men lying dead on the way[9]."

The eleventh tradition

The eleventh tradition of one Sikh being equal to one lakh and a quarter was established about this time.

The Sikhs took Lahore and coined money, November, 1761

Ahmad Shah Durrani led nearly one dozen campaigns. During his first four invasions from 1747 to 1757 he crushed the Mughal Empire and annexed Panjab and Kashmir to his dominions. In his fifth invasion, 1759-61, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat on 14 January, 1761 and they never entered the Panjab again beyond Amritsar.

When Ahmad Shah Durrani lay encamped at Panipat, a Sikh force of 10,000 under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attacked Lahore, then held by Mir Muhammad Khan, in November, 1760. The governor shut the city gates. The Sikhs plundered the suburbs, and destroyed the recently grown crops of wheat, gram and mustard. The governor offered them a sum of Rs. 30,000, for Karah-prasad and the Sikhs retired.[10]

Ahmad Shah Durrani left for Afghanistan in May, 1761. Khwajah Abed Khan was appointed the Afghan governor at Lahore. The Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attacked Lahore in November, 1761. Khwajah Abed Khan was killed, and Lahore fell into the hands of the Sikhs. The Sikhs declared Jassa Singh Ahluwalia their Padishah and struck a coin in his name which bore the following inscription : **Sikka zad dar Jahan bafazal-e-Akal, Mulk-e-Ahmad garift Jassa Kalal.** (Coin struck in the world by the grace of God, in the country of Ahmad, captured by Jassa Kalal.).

The twelfth tradition

In this achievement the Sikhs created another landmark in their history. It was to give no quarter to foreign rulers. This was their twelfth tradition.

Ghallughara, 5 February, 1762

Ahmad Shah Durrani had left Panjab in May, 1761. He must have taken nearly two months in covering about 1,000 kms from the Indus to Kandhar. After five months' stay at his capital he received the news of the capture of Lahore by the Sikhs towards the close of December, 1761. He flew into rage, collected a strong force, rushed to the Panjab, fell upon the Sikhs at Kup near Malerkotla on 5 February, 1762 and massacred about 25,000 Sikhs. Ahmad Shah stayed in the Panjab till December. The Sikhs recovered from the blow in 3 or 4 months, and created disturbances which the Durrani failed to suppress.

The thirteenth tradition

In this holocaust the slogan of the Sikhs was : "Alloy is gone; the purified Khalsa remains."This was their thirteenth tradition.

Conquest of Sirhind Province, 14 January, 1764.

The whole year of 1763 was spent by the Sikhs in plundering and punishing their enemies. In early January, 1764, the Dal Khalsa, numbering about 50,000, advanced towards Sirhind. They divided themselves into three divisions. The six misls of the Budha Dal under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia encamped at Bhaganpur. The five misls of the Taruna Dal under Hari Singh Bhangi were at Panja. The Phulkian troops under Alha Sigh were at Patiala. Zain Khan was the Afghan governor of Sirhind. He took the initiative in order to prevent all the Sikhs from uniting into a single body. On 14 January, 1764, he attacked the Taruna Dal. On hearing this news the other two groups rushed to the scene of battle and surrounded Zain Khan on all sides. While trying to escape he was shot dead.[11]

Eye-witness's account of the Durrani invasion, 1765

Taruna Dal had become responsible for western region

in January, 1764. The same year in December they had to face the seventh invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Shah was accompanied by a writer named Qazi Nur Muhammad. He compiled an account of this invasion in Persian poetry and called it *Jang Namah*. A couple of excerpts from it are given here .

Ahmad Shah on his way back crossed river Satluj at Machhiwara in March, 1765 and spent the night on its western bank. Next morning when they had hardly gone 3 kms, they were attacked by the Sikhs. The battle began. The Sikhs organised themselves in a regular battle array. "In the centre was Jassa Kalal who stood like a mountain. Close by him was the other Jassa Thokah, looking like a lion in stature. Besides, there were many other Sikh chiefs who stood at their proper places in the centre. On the right was Charat Singh, who might be called dishonoured Chartu. Jhanda, Lahna and Jai Singh were also with him. Hari Singh Bhangi, Ram Das, Gulab and Gujar were on the left."

Ahmad Shah issued strict injunctions to his chiefs not to advance at all from their places. The battle raged furiously, and the Sikhs overpowered the right flank. The Durrani summoned Nasir Khan and said to him :

"These infidels are showering arrows and bullets like the Tartars. They attack now to the right and then to the left, and I am very much struck with their boldness. You go to that side and press them hard. But remember not to advance from your place. The enemy will come to you of their own accord and you must not go to them."

On the second day the Shah started at sunrise .When they had gone only 5 kms, the Sikhs attacked them on three sides, front, right and left. The Shah called a halt

immediately. He ordered. "Nobody should go ahead and none should move from his place. Wait, the devilish foe will itself come to you. Do not step outside your ranks, but stick to your places like the Caucasus mountains. When you find that the Dogs have approached you, fall on their heads."

On the third day with th sunrise all the Afghans got on horseback and marched forward. Nur Muhammad says: "We had advanced only 10 kms when the black Dogs appeared before us as they had done the previous day..... In short these Dogs fought in a similar manner for seven days."

Seventh day's battle on the Beas

On the seventh day the Durrani reached river Beas. The Shah stood on the bank and ordered that all the loaded camels whether laden with gold or with wood, the shop-keepers, craftsmen, merchants, traders, householders, women, children, boys, bullocks and donkeys should be conveyed first across the river. When all had crossed over, the Shah himself came to the edge of the water. Just at this moment the Sikhs came, and fighting commenced.

It clearly shows that the distance of about 120 kms between Machhiwara and the Beas via Nurmahal, Nakodar and Kapurthala followed by Ahmad Shah could be covered by him in seven days, bringing an average of, 17 kms or 10 miles a day due to the obstruction of the Sikhs.

Nur Muhammad's tribute to the Sikh soldiers

Throughout his book Nur Muhammad called the Sikhs *Sag* or dog out of hatred. But while concluding his narrative at home, his sense of justice being the Qazi or the judge of Islamic law, overpowered his mind to state the

truth. Thus he wrote :

1. Do not call the Sikhs 'dogs' because they are lions and are brave like lions in a battlefield.

2. The body of each of them looks like a hillock and in grandeur it excels fifty men.

3. Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field.

4. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave girl.

5. Adultery does not exist among the dogs. A woman whether young or old is called by them **Burhiya,** one who has retired from the world. The meaning of **Burhiya** in Hindi language is an aged woman.

6. None of them is a thief. The dogs never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them and they do not keep company with the adulterer and the thief.

7. If you disbelieve in what I say, enquire from the brave warriors who will tell you more than what I have said and who would have nothing but praise for their war. The witnesses of my statement are those 30,000 heroes who fought with them.

The fourteenth tradition

To follow a certain moral code even in their triumphs was the fourteenth tradition of Sikh soldiery.

Ahmad Shah Durrani's further invasions, 1766-70

Ahmad Shah Durrani's eighth invasion took place in November, 1766. The Taruna Dal though disunited followed the Durrani in the rear and harassed him by their guerilla warfare. He advanced as far as Ismailabad, 32 kms

south of Ambala near Pehowa, and then returned home. Amar Singh of Patiala received the title of Raja-e-Rajagan on 19 March, 1767.[12]

Ahmad Shah tried to invade India for the ninth time from december, 1768 to January, 1764. He could not summon up courage to enter the Panjab and returned from Peshawar.[13]

Durrani again came to Peshawar in December, 1769, and again returned disappointed in January, 1770. He was starving for money. There was great unrest in his army and country. He felt compelled to come to Peshawar in June, 1770, the hottest month of the year. From the heights of Khaibar Pass he looked at India with wistful eyes. He had no strength of mind to fight the Sikhs and went back to Kandhar with a heavy heart.[14] Ahmad Shah Durrani died on 14 April, 1772. On this very day the Sikhs crossed the Indus and plundered Peshawar.[15]

Taimur Shah Durrani

Ahmad Shah Durrani was succeeded by hiss on Taimur Shah Durrani. He was keen to recover Multan from the Sikhs. In 1779 he came to Peshawar. His representative Haji Ali Khan met the Sikhs at Kali Serai near Hasan Abdal and threatened them to vacate Multan. The Sikhs tied him to a tree and shot him dead. As the Sikhs were disunited Taimur Shah succeeded in reoccupying Multan the same year.

Shah Zaman

Taimur Shah's son and successor, Shah Zaman, invaded Panjab four times. The Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, invited him to Delhi with offers of rich presents and Mughal princesses in marriage. Shah Zaman tried his best to reach

the imperial capital, but the Sikhs stood between him and the Emperor. He failed to march beyond Lahore. In 1799 he left Panjab and the foreign invasions from the north—west became a thing of the past. This is the greatest service rendered by the Sikhs to their motherland, and it is the most glorious record in India's politcal history.

The Mughal Empire

Let us now turn to the affairs of Delhi inthe east. It was assigned to Budha Dal, at times joined by Taruna Dal. In the second half of the eighteenth century the greatest Muslim leader in Northern India was Najib-ud-daulah, a Rohilla Afghan. He was fully supported by his Afghan brother Ahmad Shah Durrani and by Indian Musalmans. The Durrani emperor had appointed Najib Dictator of the Mughal Empire in 1761. He held this office upto 1770 until his death. Najib was a bitter enemy of the non-Muslim nationalist forces. With Ahmad Shah's help he defeated the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat in January, 1761. He killed the greatest Jat Raja of Bharatpur, Suraj Mal, in December, 1763. But he failed in crushing the Sikhs. In 1764 he made peace with the Sikhs by giving them a bribe of 11 lakhs of rupees.

The Sikhs continued their plundering incursions into Najib's territory twice or thrice every year. They drove away the people's horses, buffaloes and oxen, and gathered enormous booty from traders and merchants. Najib felt so much frustrated that like the Hindu *sadhus* he thought of spending his last days at Mecca or at some obscure retreat. He informed the Queen-Mother residing in the Red Fort that he was helpless against the Sikhs. He wrote to Emperor Shah Alam II, then living at Allahabad, to take charge of Delhi. He said he could not take any stand against the Sikhs. In a fit of despair he left Delhi without

waiting for Emperor's reply, and died on the way on October 31, 1770, at the age of 62. for personal safety.

his son and successor Zabitah Khan in 1777 adopted the Sikh religion under the new name of Dharam Singh. This led to the following saying:

Ek Guru ka do chela,
Adha Sikh, adha Rohilla.

Zabitah Khan's wife and her younger son Bhambu Khan in 1789 took shelter with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. They lived in Talwara fort on the Beas and enjoyed five villages in *Jagir* worth Rs. 7,000 a year. Bhambu Khan left Jassa Singh on the latter's death in 1803.

The fifteenth tradition

To forgive and forget was their fifteenth tradition.

(This trait of their character was shown during the first Sikh War. Whenever any British soldier fell into their hands or straggled into their camp by mistake, he was kindly treated and safely escorted into the British camp).

The Dal Khalsa at Delhi

The Sikhs had established themselves in the Sirhind province upto Karnal and Panipat. Beyond this point lay the crownlands on both sides of river Yamuna. The revenue from this area supported the royal family and met the Emperor's personal expenses. The crownlands had become a perpetual raiding ground of the Budha Dal. Najib-ud-dulah had succeeded to some extent in checking the Sikh inroads. After his death there was no check on Sikh activities. For example, on January 18, 1774, the Sikhs devastated Shahdara till midnight and departed with 50 boys (for ransom or conversion to Sikhism) when there still remained an hour and a half of night.[16]

Starving Emperor's wretched condition

The source of income from crownlands came to a dead stop. The ladies of the royal harem linked their arms together and appeared before Emperor Shah Alam II. They said their credit with all shopkeepers had been exhausted. They had been going without food for some days, and they were about to drown themselves into the Yamuna. The Emperor publicly abused his Prime Minister Najaf Khan. He called his slave Qambar, and said:"If you eat any meal today it will be drinking swine's blood. Go to Najaf Khan's house and sit down before him (in *dharna*). Don't eat anything, but prevent him too from eating, till the allowance of the harem is realised in full". On another occasion he told Maulvi Ataullah:

"My condition has come to this that I have no second coat in my wardrobe."

Once he cried out:

"I am sick of this life, — no subsistence money, overwhelming debt to the bankers and traders of Delhi. I cannot bear the shame of it any longer. O God! quickly mingle me with earth[17]!"

Rakab Ganj

On September 23, 1778, Delhi Minister Abdul Ahad's lieutenant "Bahram Quli Khan welcomed and entertained with a feast Sahib Singh Khondah and other chiefs who lay encamped near the Shalamar Gardens."

On September 26, 1778, "Abdul Ahad Khan visited the Sikhs in the garden of Yaqub Ali Khan. They presented him with bows and horses, and he granted them robes of honour."

October 1, 1778: "This was the Dasahra day, and the

Sikhs riding out went to the Guru's Bungalow near Rakab Ganj, and there demolished a mosque and ravaged the cultivated fields". The same diarist remarks:

"Jihad in the path of Allah" had taught the Sikh "Jihad in the path of the Guru". The Sikhs stayed in the capital for about a month at the expense of Abdul Ahad Khan[18]

Sikhs granted Rakhi

In 1781 Najaf Khan formally confirmed Sikh sardars in the possession of their estates south of Panipat. They were granted the right to realize *rakhi* at the rate of one-eighth of the standard land revenue due to the State, in the area from Panipat to the walls of Delhi and in the upper Ganga Doab from Hardwar to Khurja. In return the Sikhs agreed not to raid the imperial territory and to serve the Delhi Government for pay when called upon to do so. This agreement was never kept.

Seven Gurdwaras built in Delhi, 1783

In March, 1783, the Sikhs attacked Malka Ganj and Sabzi Mandi. Many people were killed in Mughalpura mohalla. Then they sacked Hauz Qazi. The Emperor urgently invited Begam Samru from Sardhana to save the capital. Meanwhile Sikhs entered the Red Fort, and placed Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the Mughal throne on 11 March, 1783.

The sixteenth tradition

To recover and renovate their gurdwaras from their enemies was their sixteenth tradition.

Oudh

Across river Ganga lies Rohilkhand. In 1774 the Nawab of Oudh had annexed Rohilkhand. The Sikhs frequently

raided it. In January, 1783, George Forster wrote:

"Being at that time in Rohilcund, I witnessed the terror and general alarm which prevailed among the inhabitants, who, deserting the open country, had retired into forts and places inaccessible to cavalry." In January, 1785, they seized goods and property of about 2,000 bankers and merchants from Chandausi worth about one crore of rupees. They carried their raids up to Chunar 750 kms. from Delhi, and 32 kms before Mughal Serai.

The English Colonel

On 3 January, 1791, the Sikhs captured Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stuart, in charge of Anupshahar cantonment on river Ganga. He was kept as a prisoner in the fort of Thanesar by Bhanga Singh for 10 months. Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, could not secure his release by diplomacy and temptation. He was set free on 24 October, 1791, on receiving a ransom of Rs. 60,000.

The Marathas

The Marathas led many expeditions against the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs, but failed to subdue them. Mahadji Sindhia, the Regent of the Mughal Empire, formed a treaty of friendship with them on 9 May, 1785, which the Sikhs broke on that very day.

The Hill States

The Sikhs dominated the hill states lying in the lower ranges of the Himalayas between river Jehlam and the Ganga, and realised tribute from all of them.

Long before Ranjit Singh, the Sikhs could have seized the whole of Northern India, if they had been united and if they had not pursued the policy of terrorism. In that case

there would have been three governments in India. The English in the east, the Marathas in the south and the Sikhs in the North.

The seventeenth tradition :

The Sikh soldiery now established the seventeenth tradition of love of adventure and no regard for observing treaties and agreements.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh made the Sikh army a model in Asia, Handsome, stalwart soldiers as if they belonged to Caucasia;

With the great Maharaja their record was fine
Like the Germans under Bismarck across the Rhine.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh adopted the practice prevalent in the armies of the British that the booty acquired by soldiers in war was not their personal property, and that it belonged to the State. In the conquest of Multan in 1818 immense booty had fallen into the hands of Maharaja's troops. A special detachment was detained at Multan to maintain peace and order and the remaining troops were ordered to return to Lahore immediately. On the arrival in their cantonments a proclamation was issued that the property acquired at Multan belonged to the State, and it must be returned to the Government treasury and *toshakhana* forthwith. The defaulters were threatened with fine, imprisonment and death. Such was the dread of Maharaja's orders that all soldiers, officers and jagirdars reluctantly returned every article of value.

Mohan Lal's reply to the Royal Prince Abbas Mirza of Iran

His Highness the Royal Prince Abbas Mirza was the father of the King of Iran. He held a special durbar on a national festival day of Iran at Mashad to which Mohan Lal

was invited to attend. The Prince asked Mohan Lal whether Ranjit Singh's court vied in magnificence with what he now saw before him, or whether the Sikh army could compare in discipline and courage with His Highness's Sirbaz (Irani regular troops).

"To this Mohan Lal modestly yet firmly replied that Maharaja Ranjit Singh's durbar tent was made of Kashmir shawls and that even the floor was composed of the same costly material, and as for his army, if Sardar Hari Singh was to cross the Indus, His Highness would soon be glad to make good his retreat to his original government of Tabriz."

Ranjit Singh's soldiers were gorgeously dressed in Kashmir silk and shawls with a profusion of golden ornaments and pearl necklaces. They rode on Irani and Turki horses. Their armour was blazing in brilliance. They had conquered Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar. They were ready to march on Kabul, but Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of British India, prevented Maharaja Ranjit Singh not to advance beyond the mouth of the Khaibar Pass.

Qualities of Ranjit Singh's Sikh army

1. According to Hunter the Sikh army for steadiness and religious fervour had had no parallel since the Ironsides of Oliver Cromwell.

2. Baron Charles Hugel during his visit to Panjab in 1836 observed:

"It was flower of chivalry and nobility of the time."

3. Osborne in 1838 considered the Sikh soldiers "the finest material in the world for forming an army."

He further said:

"No native power has yet possessed so large and well disciplined a corps," and "creditable to any artillery in the world.

Endurance

The distance between Lahore and Peshawar by the Grand Trunk Road is 455 kms. or nearly equal to the distance between Delhi and Pathankot. The G.T. road was rough, uneven, dusty in dry days and muddy during rains. It had no bridges anywhere. There were no cantonments to provide boarding and lodging. On the way four big rivers, Ravi, Chenab, Jehlam and the Indus, all without bridges of boats and other numerous rivulets and streams had to be crossed. Every soldier carried his foodstuff, utensils, clothes, blankets and arms all weighing about 20 kg. Prince Nau Nihal Singh and Raja Gulab Singh, at the head of 3,000 troops, both horse and foot, and twelve cannon which could be carried in carts, reached Lahore from Peshawar on the evening of the 5th day in September, 1840, when all the rivers were in flood, covering about 100 kms daily. Alexander Gardner followed them with his 900 infantry and reached Lahore on the seventh day covering nearly 70 kms daily on foot.

A certain Sikh soldier often travelled on foot from Lahore to Peshawar in five days. He was called *Chali Koha* one who could walk 40 kos or 100 kms. daily.

Alexander Gardner had a Sikh in his corps of artillery who repeatedly went on foot from Lahore to Jammu and brought back replies in less than 36 hours. The distance between Lahore and Jammu by the shortest route is 160 kms.

Gardner says there were several Sikh soldiers who could go 100 kms. daily for 12 or 15 days continuously.

Steinbach, a Colonel in the Sikh army in 1844, said the Sikh soldiery was so hardy that oppressive heat or cold or heavy rain produced no effect upon them. There were no cantonments on the way for rest. They put up in small tents or in ruined mosques or caravan seraes.

Steinbach further observed that a Sikh soldier might not claim "a greater degree of prowess than other Oriental troops", yet he possessed certain qualities superior to others. He could live on a small quantity of food. He could endure great fatigue, and could cover "marches that none but the Turkoman Tartars can perform"

The eighteenth tradition

The eighteenth tradition established by the Sikh soldiery under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was endurance, grandeur, glory and fame.

Post Ranjit Singh period

Hari Singh Nalwa had been killed in the battle of Jamrud near Peshawar in 1837. Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839. After Ranjit Singh Prince Nau Nihal Singh alone could keep the Sikh army under control. Unfortunately he fell a victim to the British intrigues, and died at the young age of 19 years and 8 months in November, 1840.

After Nau Nihal Singh no strong man was left to control the Sikh army. Immediately after the Prince's death, the Sikh soldiers plundered the royal residences inside the fort, the treasury and the houses of government officials. Afterwards the city of Lahore and all other important towns were plundered. Rapes and murders became a common feature of a Sikh soldier's life. The movement assumed

anti-foreign shape. Foulkes, a young English officer, posted at Mandi in the Kangra hills was roasted alive. Mouton, a French officer in Kulu hills, was beaten and imprisoned. Major Ford in Hazara district was plundered and beaten. A government treasure of 9 lakhs at Attock was plundered. Avitabile, the governor of Peshawar, saved himself by recruiting 3,000 Afghans. Steinbach was threatened to be drowned in urine. General Mihan Singh, governor of Kashmir, was abused in full durbar, and then beheaded in his house. Their own brethren, the Sikh soldiers, wounded and alive, were thrown into the big heaps of dead bodies and were burnt alive by sprinkling kerosene oil. When the wounded protested, they said: "*Charhja, charhja, ki khauf onda ee.*"

The nineteenth tradition :

Without a strong head Burchha Gardi or Sikha Shahi became their nineteenth tradition.

The Sikh wars

During the first Sikh war the Sikh soldiers displayed true nationalism. Being deserted by their generals and commanders, and their sovereign they put up in vain the most determined efforts to preserve their state and their freedom.

Mudki

M'Gregor who fought in the war says:

It was proved at the battle of Mudki that the Sikhs were far superior to any foes the British army of India had ever encountred in the field.

M'Gregor further observes: After the battle of Mudki some European soldiers straggled into Sikh camp in the

darkness. Instead of being made prisoners or ill used, each was kindly treated, given one rupee and safely escorted to the British camp.

Firozshah

Furthermore M'Gregor says in the battle of Firozshah many English officers and soldiers fell into the hands of the Sikhs. They were treated with great consideration, and were set free and sent safely into the British camp.

Sergeant Bingham wrote a poem on the battle of Firozshah. He says:

"But let me give these foes their due,
They are both brave and generous too;
I saw their chief without an arm,
His son upon a litter borne.

Regardless of the loss of limb,
Patrol the camp by moonlight dim,
With kindness sooth the wounded men,
Re-antimate the rest again;

And as I watched, I wished that he
Were but a Sike commanding me".

Baddowal

Shah Muhammad says that Mewa Singh captured British guns, elephants, camels and stallion steeds, etc. along with 15 British officers and 77 soldiers as prisoners.

Aliwal

A Sikh sergeant, quite handsome, above 50 years of age with long and bushy grey beard which covered his breast, lost both of his legs by a cannon shot. Major G.C. Smyth talked to him for ten minutes. He had such a wonderful

control over his pain as could not be believed. He bore no expression of grief on his face. He spoke boldly without betraying any sign of suffering. Smyth told him that an English surgeon would soon operate upon him and would save his life. He just smiled at the idea, saying he would not like to live without his legs always dependent upon others. He asked for water. The Major called a water-carrier. The Sergeant washed his face which was covered with blood and dust. He pulled off a silver ring with a ruby in it, and gave it to the *mashki,* and requested the British soldiers who surrounded him to put an end to his life by bayoneting him.

Sabraon

M'Gregor writes:

"Such a victory, however, could not be achieved without an immense sacrifice and probably there is no action on record where so many officers were killed and wounded, as that which occurred on the 10th February"

Lieutenant-General Joseph Thackwell said:

"It is due to the Sikhs to say that they fought bravely, for though defeated and broken, they never ran, but fought with their tilwars to the last; and I witnessed several acts of great bravery in some of their officers and men".

Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, wrote to Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister:

"Policy precludes me from publicly recording my sentiments on the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe, or to record the acts of heroism displayed not only individually, but almost collectively by the Sikh soldiers and army; and I declare, were it not from a deep conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to

have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body of men."

The second Sikh war is a misnomer. It was no war in reality. The first Anglo Sikh War of 1845-46 had destroyed the Sikh kingdom for all intents and purposes. If Mulraj of Multan and Sher Singh Atariwala had not revolted, the Sikh kingdom of Lahore would have survived as a protected state like Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Hyderabad.

The twenieth tradition

During these wars the Sikhs established the twentieth tradition that they possessed truly nationalist spirit.

To sum up twenty traditions of Sikh soldiery :

1. To defend the innocent people against government oppression.
2. To have a national army and no mercenaries.
3. To wage a war of liberation (*dharam yudh*) against foreign rule.
4. Sublimation of sex instinct.
5. Holy warriors or saint soldiers.
6. Love of freedom.
7. Blind belief in religious head.
8. Self-confidence and defiance of difficulties.
9. Two divisions into Budha Dal and Taruna Dal.
10. Unity in division.
11. Belief that one Sikh is equal to one lakh and a quarter.
12. Victory over foreign rulers.
13. To consider their deceased brethren in a holy war as

the disappearance of alloy and leaving behind purified Khalsa.

14. To follow a certain moral code even in their triumphs.
15. To forgive and forget.
16. To recover and renovate their gurdwaras from their enemies.
17. Love of adventure and no regard for agreements and treaties.
18. Endurance, grandeur and glory.
19. Without a strong head Burchha Gardi or Sikha Shahi.
20. Cherishing truly nationalistic and patriotic spirit.

Conclusion

In conclusion it may be pointed out that the evolution of Sikh soldiery during the period under review falls into eight clear-cut phases, and throughout they had two objectives military and political. They are briefly summed up as follows:

(1)
Guru Hargobind

Military : To create liking for military life among his Sikhs.

Political : To protest against Shah Jahan's religious bigotry.

Result : The Guru had to leave Amritsar for good and lead a retired life in the lower Shivalik hills at Kiratpur.

Soldiers' gain : Acquired experience in fighting both offensive and defensive actions.

(2)
Guru Gobind Singh

Military : To create a naitonal army consisting of Sikhs only.

Political : To oppose Aurangzeb's fanaticism.

Result : The Guru was obliged to bid good bye to Anandpur, and he lost his life as a result of court intrigues.

Soldiers' gain : Fought only defensive actions. Soldier's profession became popular among lower classes of Hindus.

(3)
Banda Bahadur

Military : To collect and organise the remnants of the Khalsa into a united body.

Political : To seize and put to death Wazir Khan, governor of Sirhind.

Result : Created the first Sikh state with a capital, coin and administration of its own.

Soldiers' gain : Realized the difference between those who were in power and those who were out of power, and got a taste for a national government.

(4)
Next 50 years after Banda's execution

Military : To reorganise themselves into strong armed groups and then into a united body.

Political : To liberate the Panjab from the Mughals and the Durranis of Afghanistan.

Result : Seized Lahore in 1765 and established their own government.

Soldiers' gain : The soldiers became the rulers.

(5)
Last 35 years of 18th century

Military : To put an end to foreign invasions and to amass wealth from the Mughal empire.

Political : To establish their supremacy in the Panjab, both in plains and hills.

Result : Most of Panjab, Jammu, Shivalik hills, and Ganga Doab came under their domination.

Soldiers' gain : Immense riches, pride and audacity.

(6)
Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Military : To subdue independent chiefs and to control the Khaibar Pass in order to close the invaders' gateway.

Political : To establish a strong Sikh kingdom.

Result : Complete success in both the objectives.

Soldiers' gain : Best dressed, best adorned in golden ornaments with finest horses and shining arms, pride of the Panjab, India, Asia and the world.

(7)
Nau Nihal Singh

Military : To keep ready to face the foe.

Political : To eliminate foreign influence from court and country.

Result : The Prince lost his life as a result of foreign intrigues.

Soldiers' gain : The Sikh soldiery lost their last great leader.

(8)
Post Nau Nihal Singh period

Military : To expel all European officers from civil and military service of the Lahore Durbar.

Political : To preserve the Sikh state from disintegration.

Result : All the expelled foreign officers gathered at Ludhiana, and in collaboration with the English political department and the Regent Queen formed plans against the Sikh army. It resulted in the break up of the Sikh state.

Soldiers' gain : Destruction and dissolution of one of the finest armies the world had known.

Ladies and Gentlemen! This rustic old man, standing before you, now living in the graveyard region of the Sikh army and the Sikh state at Firozpur, has told you the sad and tearful story of Panjab's brightest jewel of modern times, shaped by Guru Gobind Singh, chiselled into brilliance by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and broken to pieces by the Sikhs themselves and by the intrigues of a foreign

power. It is a well known saying that histroy repeats itself. It is the speaker's sincerest prayer that such a thing may not happen again in our dear homeland. May the divine light of God, Gurus and Granth be your guide! Amen!

The End

References and Notes

1. *Toozuk-I-Jehangeeree*, Alligurh, 1864, p. 243.
2. The *Dabistan*, 234.
3. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 652-53.
4. Ibid, 669-70; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 423-24.
5. Kamwar Khan, quoted by Karam Singh in his *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha*, 26.
6. Khafi Khan in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 424.
7. Guru Gobind Singh had himself seen this practice when in Bahadur Shah's Camp. A severe pestilence had broken out in the imperial army at Burhanpur. A high fever lasting for a week resulted in death. Hindu Rajput prisoners were made to carry sick Muslim soldiers and to dig graves for the dead.

   (Anonymous, *Tarikh-e-Bahadur Shah* in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 566.)
8. George Forster Journey, 1, 312-13.
9. Tahmas Khan, *Tazkirah*, 94-96.
10. Ali-ud-din, *Ibrat Nama*, Ms. 120a-121b.
11. Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 501.
12. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence (C.P.C.)*, II, 107C, D, 130A, 266, 415; *Delhi Chronicle*, 211; Nur-ud-din, 109b, 110a.
13. C.P.C., II, 1499; Bengal Select Committee proceedings, 1769 A.D., pp. 134, 195, 203, 238 (National Archives of India—N.A.I.), New Delhi.
14. N.A.I., Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1770 A.D., p. 259, dated 19 July, 1770; *Delhi Chronicle*, 225.
15. *Delhi Chronicle*, 250.
16. *Waqae Shah Alam Sani*, 273.
17. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Fall *of the Mughal Empire*, III, 199-200.
18. Delhi Chromcle, 311, 350-51; Khair-ud-din, ll